

PROCUREMENT POLICES AND REGULATIONS TASK FORCE

MEETING MINUTES

March 26, 2015 – 4:00 p.m.

5th Floor Council Conference Room, Council Office Building

Members Present

Wayne Cobb
Tom Creamer
Eppie Hankins
Buddy Henley
Linda Moore

David Robbins, Chair
Jan Zappold

Member Absent

Daniel Parra

County Staff Present:

Dan Hoffman, Chief Innovation Officer, Procurement Innovation Project
Marie Jean-Paul, County Council
Linda McMillan, County Council
Mary Anne Paradise, County Council
Linda Price, County Council
Phil Royston, Department of Health and Human Services
Stuart Venzke, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Health and Human Services

I. Call to Order and Approval of Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Task Force Chair Robbins at 4:02 p.m. The minutes from the March 12, 2015, meeting were unanimously approved by all Task Force members present.

II. Procurement Innovation Project (PIP)

Mr. Hoffman presented an overview of the PIP. Topics covered included a background and overview of the project, review process, and the contract award status.

- Background

- Mr. Hoffman reviewed the County Executive's goals for the project, including reducing the time needed for the procurement process and utilizing more local small businesses for government contracts.
- Recently, the County Executive sent to the Council a reorganization plan to establish an Office of Procurement, separate from the Department of General Services, in order to allow more attention to be given to the procurement process.
- PIP will identify recommendations that will align with the new Procurement Office structure. Once PIP completes its review, Procurement may have a completely new office structure.

- Process

- A consultant will be brought in to work with an internal working group with the goal of developing a discreet series of recommendations. Mr. Hoffman indicated that the project is intended to be completed within four to five months and will receive input from the using departments, and that the goal is to balance concerns of vendors with the needs of the County departments to provide the best value for taxpayers.

- Award Status
 - He noted that nine to ten solicitations were received through the LSBRP. He hopes to make an award in the coming days.
 - Ms. Moore said the public's perception of the project must be considered throughout its duration. She noted the short notice period when the solicitation was released.

III. Discussion – Procurement Process for Using Departments

Mr. Venzke, Chief Operating Officer and Phil Royston, Lead Contract Manager from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) participated in this initial discussion with County using departments.

To guide the discussion, HHS was asked to provide information on the following topics:

- Volume/Amount of contracts per year;
- Types of procurements (RFP/IFB/Informal/Non-Competitive);
- Length of time it generally takes from creation of solicitation through contract award;
- Any issues that have come up during the procurement process; and
- Areas for improvement.

After giving an overview of the programs and structure of HHS, Mr. Venzke spoke to the following points:

- HHS has 588 active contracts, 90 contracts are awarded through RFPs, 146 are non-competitive through the County Council, 127 are community grants, 130 are open contracts where the department publishes a rate, 8 are commodities based bridge contracts, 24 are grant-designated, 7 are IFB's, 13 informal contracts, and 30 contracts are with other public entities. Most of DHHS' contracts are awarded to non-profit organizations and many include an inflationary adjustment. The Department averages approximately 30 solicitations per year.
- Traditional RFPs take an average of eight months to a year to complete. DHHS is the largest single procurer in the County, and Mr. Venzke said it remains a paper-based process. Challenges to the process include vendor lock, and the department is working to expand the potential pool of vendors and to move toward outcomes-based contracts and to provide performance incentives. There is also a push to have contracts in place by the start of the new fiscal year on July 1. A significant amount of time is spent on contract monitoring, and eighty percent of contracts are for re-solicitations. The departments wants to balance the contracts and compensations models while allowing room for vendors' innovations.
- Mr. Venzke said the department conducts pre-proposal meetings with vendors and would like to see real competition for contracts. The department spends time with vendors prior to the RFP, and needs to be able to let vendors know when a large contract is forthcoming. This has been done through the use of vendor fairs and other means. Unsuccessful bidders can request feedback, and Ms. Moore noted that vendors can request a copy of the winning proposal. Mr. Cobb suggested that the scoring of individual proposals, or aggregate scores, be made available.

- Chair Robbins said the group would consider feedback challenges more in depth at a future meeting.
- Ms. Hankins suggested that end user department heads meet with new vendors. Mr. Venzke said this has not been done historically, and noted that the department is prohibited from meeting with vendors after issuance of the RFP.

IV. Future Meeting Planning and Discussion

The following discussion points were made:

- The Task Force agreed that it is premature to provide feedback about the County Council's pending procurement legislation and requested that the Council staff provide a specific list of questions for consideration.
- Ms. Moore noted that the amount of procurements \$10,000 and below is a large number. She would like to get more information on this and would like to know how big of a spending push is done at the end of the fiscal year.
- It was suggested that the Task Force revisit the straw poll of issues after the next meeting to sharpen the group's focus.
- It was expressed that many feel the County uses the RFP as an RFI to figure out its strategy.
- Ms. Price suggested it may be helpful to hear from a smaller County department that is an infrequent use of the procurement system. Speakers at the next meeting will be asked what they would change in the procurement system and for suggestions to increase the speed and transparency of the process.
- Ms. McMillan said the issues are the time it takes to complete formal solicitations, and the lack of departmental resources. She suggested the Task Force ask what might change outside the department and involvement from other County offices, such as the County Attorney. She indicated that a separate Office of Procurement is seen as favorable by the County Council and the County Executive.
- The next meeting on April 9, 2015, will continue discussions with County using departments. The Department of Transportation and the Department of Technology Services will participate in this meeting. Chair Robbins requested that a representative from the County Attorney's Office attend the next meeting or send an alternate.
- Ms. Price said a discussion with Griffin & Strong will be held on April 1, 2015, at 5:30 p.m. with the Minority Owned and Local Small Business Task Force.
- Ms. Price noted that there is an Internal Procurement Guide for use by departments and is scheduled to be updated.

V. Public Comment

There were no comments from public meeting participants.

The meeting adjourned at 5:32 p.m.
